Inspiring Critical Thinking and Community via Books, Lessons, and Story

Critical Thinking for Building Community via #PublicDomainInfrastructure: Public Transit, Public Libraries, Public Education, and Public Health Care

How a missed trash can led to Formation Tortue, but learning languages may help…

December 17, 12021 Health Care, languagelearning Asterix, c-ptsd, childabuse, languagelearning, universalhealthcar

This is a slightly edited re-posting, to finish the theme of how childhood trauma informs and affects our adult lives, that has been going this past few weeks of Some Tours being Worth Marching, and then Some Beatings being Worth Taking, after Floating on the ceiling as Punishment for hitting your elders in the Jaw, and learning that I Shouldn't Exist?

—

Why did that paper ball flying over my head make me dive for the floor?

Shortly after I turned 51 years of age, a young coworker launched a simple balled up bit of paper at the trash can in front of me. It missed. What I saw was not a mere bit of paper becoming litter, however. Out of the corner of my eye, something came flying at me from behind. I reacted instinctively: by ducking. Since this was not the normally appropriate behavior for a 51 year old woman in an office environment, you can well imagine my embarrassment. My coworker apologized profusely: the poor thing had simply missed a trash can with a tiny bit of paper. What he saw was a reaction out of a Roman Turtle formation . I also apologized profusely, but the damage was already done. For the rest of the day, coworkers eyed me suspiciously and slowly walked over to place their trash in the bin. The awkwardness was palpable, and I was grateful when some of my Mexican coworkers began talking and joking in Spanish, drawing attention away from the incident.

As I sat on my afternoon break with a cup of hot water, I suddenly recalled a time I haven't thought of in over 40 years. Another object was flying over my head from behind me, but it was not a simple bit of paper.

It was a belt buckle.

Pandemonium had broken loose as an old man bellowed his wrath, and swung his belt. I was the only person in the room not running away. For some reason, I could see the old man, the belt, and the other kids in the room. All looked either furious or frightened. But it all seemed to be happening somewhere else, with me simply frozen in place. The sounds were there, but muted as if in an old fashioned film.

It suddenly hit me that this event was from a time that I had worked very hard to forget. I'd been 9 years old, in the house overnight of a babysitter who was rather negligent. I told my mother, yet she did nothing. So, I forgot. But I never knew why objects flying over my head made me panic; until today.

Spanish, in particular Mexican Spanish, has always been my favorite language to switch into when I need to move my thoughts out of English. As a child, I'd always wished that I had magical powers to allow me to fight, or that I had a fairy sister to defend me, but the reality was that I was thrown back upon my own resources, so hiding or being ready to run usually seemed to be my best option. Hiding from my own thoughts was fairly easily accomplished, even in my dreams at times, by singing or thinking in Spanish.

It turned out that I could not hide from myself indefinitely. Things we'd rather not remember have a way of springing up, in the end. As I began to get therapy for events from my childhood it turned out that hiding and forgetting was not an effective way of dealing with those events. I had to relive them, again. This was probably more frustrating for my therapists than it even was for me, as I was told again and again that pushing away the memories would only make my #C-PTSD worse. But the focus on just being functional made it easy to ignore, once I was back in a job where I could pour my time and attention into something complex. (This 13-26 week cap that Medicaid puts on the number of sessions is yet another reason that we need full #UniversalHealthCare for everyone. Complex cases of many illnesses require long-term therapy that, when covered, will make for a healthier work force and population, not just the functional-to-panic-back-to-functionality roller coaster that kills so much time and so many people, in the end…)

The final straw arrived when the regional economy took a dive, sending myself and the vast majority of people I knew out of work. Some went to California, and I went overseas for work. In a new country and environment, stress flared up, and so did my panic anxiety. But this time I had to talk to a therapist in a language I was only just beginning to learn. As it turned out, I was finally able to access a good bit of the emotional content, while remaining present and able to stem the tide of anxiety during each session. As we began to unpack more of the childhood memories I'd been avoiding, being forced to express myself in a language I was still learning appeared to keep me emotionally distanced enough to prevent being pulled completely into the pain of the original event. When I came back to the USA, I found in California that having a Mexican therapist allowed us to switch from my native English, which was required to access the full emotion of the memory, into Spanish. So when she needed to lower the intensity level of the session, but keep me in the memory, she would switch into Spanish, distanc-

ing me just enough from the experience to process it. Who would have thought that #learning a #language could help in this case? But, it did.

So, what would Astérix do? He'd ask the Druid Panoramix, who would say: Il faut #ArreterdeFumer tout de suite !!

originally posted in April, 12020 HE

Action Prompts:

1.) Share your thoughts on how this story may encourage empathy-building cooperation, and might help, or hinder, inclusive thinking.

2.) Write a story, post or tweet that uses those thoughts.

Dear Readers, ideas on *learning,* especially *multiple #LanguageLearning, on-going education* and *empathy-building*, to #EndPoverty, #EndHomelessness, #EndMoneyBail & achieve freedom for All HumanKind?

Support our key #PublicDomainInfrastructure & #StopSmoking at least for CCOVID-19:
1. #PublicLibraries,
2. #ProBono legal aid and Education,
3. #UniversalHealthCare, and
4. good #publictransport
Read, Write

-we can learn from the past *Stayed on Freedom's Call* for free,

by Teaching and Learning (Lesson Plans offline) in the present, to

We can Do Better: to create a kinder future

Peace

Shira Destinie A. Jones, MPhil, MAT, BSCS

the year, 2021 CE = year 12021 HE

(5 month GED lesson 21 of 67 plans…),

and Ranger M.'s Babylon 5 review posts, because story inspires learning, and historical stories inspire tool-building, right? "Of course right!"

Stayed on Freedom's Call
(***free***: https://archive.org/details/StayedOnF…)

includes two 'imagination-rich' walking tours, with songs, of Washington, DC. New interviews and research are woven into stories of old struggles shared by both the Jewish and African-American communities in the capital city.

Shared histories are explored from a new perspective of cultural parallels and parallel institution-building which brought the two communities together culturally and historically.

Please leave a review, if you can, on the GoodReads page.

Shira

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29 thoughts on "How a missed trash can led to Formation Tortue, but learning languages may help…"

koolkosherkitchen

December 17, 12021 at 6:52 AM

This story is riveting. it should be used to train therapists.
I am glad I am back after a long hiatus and will have a long vacation to allow me time to read your thought-provoking posts.
Much love,
D

★ Liked by 3 people

★ ShiraDest

December 17, 12021 at 8:53 AM

Thank you, Dolly, and I am glad you're back, too! I look forward to your thoughts!
I wonder, btw, if teachers wouldn't also benefit from some form of the information distilled in this story: when I taught in the classroom, I often found the ability to switch into Spanish to be quite helpful with my students from